

**BATTLE CREEK CITY PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, December 7, 2011**

**1. Call to Order:**

Chairman Preston Hicks, called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

**2. Attendance:**

**Members Present:**

Steve Barker	Jan Frantz	Chip Spranger
Susan Baldwin (Mayor)	John Godfrey	John Stetler
Dan Buscher	Preston Hicks	

**Staff Excused:** Dave Walters

**Staff Present:** Christine Hilton, Planning Supervisor  
Jill Steele, Deputy City Attorney  
Glenn Perian, Senior Planner  
Leona Parrish, Administrative Assistant, Planning Dept.

**3. Additions or Deletions to the Agenda: None**

**4. Approval of Minutes: Meeting Minutes of October 26, 2011.**

**MOTION WAS MADE BY COMMISSIONER GODFREY, SUPPORTED BY  
COMMISSIONER BARKER, TO APPROVE THE PLANNING COMMISSION  
MEETING MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 26, 2011 AS PRESENTED.**

**VOTE ON MOTION: ALL IN FAVOR; NONE OPPOSED; MOTION CARRIED.**

**5. Correspondence:** Received letter of opposition at today's meeting regarding Zoning Reclassification #Z-01-11 for 1743 W. Michigan Avenue; asked that it be read into the record from Ms. Marie Kraft who is the owner of MJ Rumors Hair & Tanning.

**6. Public Hearings and Deliberation / Recommendations:**

- A. Zoning Reclassification #Z-01-11:** Petition from Ms. Joy Brown, LaJoya Properties, Inc., 635 S. Gull Lake Drive, Richland, MI 49083, requesting a Zoning Reclassification from an "R-2 Two Family Residential District" to an "R-3B Multiple Family Residential District" for property located at 1743 W. Michigan Avenue, parcel #4290-00-014-0.

**Commissioner Hicks Opened the Public Hearing:**

Ms. Christine Hilton stated this property has previously only been zoned as an R-2, and allowed only two dwelling units on this property and at some time prior to its current owner it had been converted to a three-unit. Said the petitioner asked what would need to be done to establish it as a three-unit. Stated she told the petitioner that one process would be to apply for a Use Variance from the Zoning Board of Appeals; which is stringent regarding the criteria required for approval, as it would need to show that the property cannot be used under the current zoning ordinance. Noted that staff did not feel they could offer a favorable recommendation for that

type of request as it does not meet the standards for the City ordinance or State law. Ms. Hilton noted the second option for the petitioner would be to request for the rezoning to an “R-3B Multiple Family Residential”, based on our Master Plan the existing land use in the surrounding area and future land use map show that it would not be an instance of spot zoning as the property to the south is multiple family and is contiguous and complementary to that use, therefore staff is recommending approval.

The letter received at today’s meeting from Ms. Marie Kraft, owner of MJ Rumors Hair & Tanning was read into the record requesting that the application for rezoning to be denied. (See attached letter).

Ms. Joy Brown, 635 S. Gull Lake Drive, Richland, MI 49083, property owner came forward to speak regarding her request; stated she wanted to address the letter submitted at today’s meeting. Said she had attended the Neighborhood Planning Council meeting and met all the neighbors and talked to everyone, answered their questions and had received a unanimous yes vote. Said she obviously does not want to rent to drug people and plan to have her son live in one of the units. States she plans to make it nice and will drive by it daily to watch over.

Ms. Marcia Moan, 17 Broadway Blvd., stated she lives across the street on Michigan Ave. and believes they are speaking of the apartment building two doors down which is not in direct line on W. Michigan.; noted the apartment building is down by the river, and separated from the houses on W. Michigan Ave. with a house in between. Stated she has lived at her present home for 47 years and have watched the property in question deteriorate over the years and had illegally put in the third apartment. Said they have called Code Compliance over the years and finally closed the house up because of the drug dealings and does not believe they need another house rezoned in that area as it sits on the corner of Michigan and Stringham Rd. with a driveway on Stringham Rd. that would have two cars per unit coming out onto a road that is 30 ft. from the intersection on Michigan Ave. Noted there are enough apartment houses and do not need to have more.

*With no others wishing to speak, Commissioner Hicks closed the public hearing.*

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GODFREY, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER SPRANGER TO APPROVE THE ZONING RECLASSIFICATION FROM AN “R-2 TWO-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL” TO AN “R-3A MULTIPLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT” FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 1743 W. MICHIGAN AVENUE, AS OUTLINED IN THE FINDINGS IN THE STAFF REPORT.**

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Godfrey asked the petitioner if there would be adequate parking. Ms. Brown stated yes there is plenty of room for parking as shown in the drawings; said she is sorry for the neighbors past experience with this property and that they want to make it a nice as possible as they are waiting on this decision to know how to proceed with the remodeling.

Commissioner Godfrey asked if the parking spaces are there currently or would they need to be created. Ms. Brown stated the current parking area had a cement parking block there, and that it would be very easy to create parking for everyone where each tenant would have their own designated spaces (two for each apartment).

Commissioner Godfrey asked if there are currently three units. Ms. Brown stated yes, even though the property is zoned for two and was not sure when it had been illegally changed to three units. Stated the records show when Code Compliance inspected the rental units, they had been approved each time and that she would like to keep the floor plan as it is currently with the three units and make them legal.

Ms. Jill Steele, Deputy City Attorney noted when the property had been inspected as a rental by Code Compliance in the past it had not been required for them to check the zoning until the rental ordinance was changed in 2007 so they comply with zoning.

Mayor Baldwin asked if the “C-2 General Business District” or the “O-1 Office District” allowed for residential use. Ms. Hilton stated no, residential use is not allowed in business zones.

Mayor Baldwin stated that the Master Plan shows Stringham Rd. with residential areas. Ms. Hilton stated on the future land use map the left edge of the office/commercial district shown is Stringham Road.

Commissioner Buscher asked regarding the motion and support; if the commissioner supported it with any and all conditions placed on by the staff report. Noted that on page 3 of 7 on the last paragraph; says we cannot place any conditions on this approval for the rezoning, is this correct. Ms. Hilton stated the motion should reflect the request meets the basis for determination for approval rather than conditions.

Commissioner Hicks clarified that the motion was to include the basis for determination.

Mayor Baldwin asked Ms. Hilton to explain the two different requests the property had to comply. Ms. Hilton stated when a property owner wants to change the use of their property, they have a few options: one is a Use Variance that is applied through the Zoning Board of Appeals, which essentially allows the use of a property other than what it is allowed for in the zoning ordinance. The State Law and our ordinance and case law is very strict on approval of Use Variances and there has to be an unnecessary hardship that the zoning ordinance places on a property that says there is no use allowed by ordinance for the property as it exist and cannot comply with the zoning ordinance. The use variance should be approved only if the criteria had been met.

Mayor Baldwin asked Ms. Hilton if the Master Plan shows commercial use and not recognize the existing residential complex. Ms. Hilton stated yes, it does call for a higher use intensity; that allows for parking lots, lighting, etc., so it complies with the Master Plan.

Commissioner Stetler made reference to the Emmett Street property that applied for a zoning variance where it had been built as a two-unit, requesting to be used as a three-unit residential and was denied by the Zoning Board. Stated he is having a problem with the inconsistency actions coming from the city and not from the Planning Commission or Zoning Board of Appeals and asked Ms. Hilton to explain if this is approved, why it is not a blatant inconsistency.

Ms. Hilton explained again there are two types of request: a “use variance” and a “re-zoning request”, the use variance has a very strict criteria for approval, where you cannot use the property for anything allowed in the zoning district of which it is located; which is what the property on

Emmett Street wanted; it had been built as a two-unit and was currently zoned “Single-Family Residential” and had abandoned its legal-nonconforming 2-unit use, saying they cannot use this property as a single-family home. Ms. Hilton stated it had an interior stairway that could have been opened up to become a single-family unit and then would be in compliance with its current zoning district. Therefore, the Zoning Board of Appeals denied their request to use this property as a “Two-Family Residential” in a “Single-Family Residential” zoning district. Noted with a re-zoning request it does not have by case law or by statute that strict of criteria for approval, as there are different standards for approval with a rezoning request such as: is it consistent with the master plan, current land use map, properties in the surrounding area and would it be a case of spot zoning. Therefore, the two different types of request have two different criteria.

Commissioner Frantz asked Commissioner Stetler about his comment on the Emmett St. property; The property under discussion here is surrounded by land uses that include office as well as R-3A similar land uses or commercial area offices and regarding the Emmett Street property where all of the family’s Single-Family dwellings or was it similar to this request. Commissioner Stetler stated the hospital is across the street and the homes on either side were either single or two-family and believes some of the two-family still exist.

Ms. Hilton stated regarding the Emmett Street situation all the surrounding homes were zoned single-family residential; and if they would have requested a rezoning it would have been just that property being changed to multiple-family or two-family which is something different than the surrounding properties and would have been a case of spot zoning.

**A VOTE WAS TAKEN: ALL IN FAVOR; NONE OPPOSED; MOTION APPROVED.**

- B. Special Use Permit #S-06-11:** Petition from First Pentecostal Church, Rev. Elmer Hess, 321 Main St., Battle Creek, MI 49014. Requesting a Special Use Permit of the following described property for use as a Church as permitted under the Planning and Zoning Code, Chapter 1290.01(b)(23), for property located at 4720 Beckley Road, Parcel #4290-00-014-0.

*Commissioner Hicks Opened the Public Hearing:*

Ms. Christine Hilton stated that most religious assembly uses are allowed by Special Use Permit throughout the city and there are some exceptions within the zoning ordinance for certain districts; one of which is the “C-6 Major Highway Interchange District”. Churches are allowed by Special Use Permit and the ordinance states they have to be located on a major street as shown on the Major Streets Plan and on a lot or parcel not less than one acre. Stated this parcel does meet that criteria and the applicant is currently in the community and has been for the past 30 years and want to relocate to this facility. Stated they outlined the standards that staff believes they have met for approval and are in favor of their request with the conditions outlined in the staff report.

Rev. Elmer Hess came forward to speak and stated he has been a pastor for 31 years in the Battle Creek area and is here today with his son Mr. Elmer Hess, Jr., who is a co-pastor as well as Mr. Robert Humbarger who is their legal counsel. Stated he had originally purchased and renovated the property on Sheppard Street in 1980, and outgrew it and then bought the old Central Christian Church on Main Street and have done the same thing at that location. Said their church has grown and are a multicultural congregation, have been good neighbors in the city, do what they can to help build the community and they have a desire to reach families, youth, and individuals in the

community. Said they are here today to seek a Special Use Permit for 4720 Beckley Road property for a church and have appropriated approximately \$800,000 dollars for renovation of the existing building. Noted they had been before the Neighborhood Planning Council and received their unanimous consent and are here today seeking the Planning Commission's approval of their Special Use Permit.

Commissioner Buscher asked Pastor Hess what was to happen to the Main St. property. Pastor Hess stated he has a potential buyer that has not given their permission to share that information. Commissioner Buscher asked if all of the current church functions will then be moved to the new location. Pastor Hess stated that was correct.

Mr. Ron Lapland, owner of Farm Bureau Insurance Co. located next door at 4744 Beckley Rd. came forward to speak. Stated he was in favor of the project, thinks it would be a welcome addition to the area and is very excited about it as it is better than having a bar next door.

*With no others wishing to speak, Commissioner Hicks closed the public hearing.*

Commissioner Frantz asked Pastor Hess if the activities that involve parking and traffic will be taking place throughout the week or will most of the traffic be generated on Sundays. Pastor Hess stated they have not relocated there as yet, but are projecting they will have activities in the afternoons and will be a family worship center where currently there are not a lot of family venues in the community and they want to attempt to bring community events to their church. Stated there will not be any late night services. Commissioner Frantz asked if the family activities involved worship and other things during the day at the church and on Sundays. Pastor Hess stated yes, that is correct and have 180 parking spaces available with a congregation of about 200 and are relocating to allow for growth.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER BARKER, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER BUSCHER TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A CHURCH FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4720 BECKLEY ROAD, TO INCLUDE THE STAFF FINDINGS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS NOTED IN THE STAFF REPORT.**

**Discussion:**

Commissioner Barker stated in reading the petition he has difficulty in supporting this Special Use Request where they are asking to take over 5.5 acres of prime commercial real estate and convert it over into a non-tax function with a use inconsistent with the area. Noted in reviewing the Transitional Business District ordinance statute having a gradual reduction of intensity between commercial and residential districts, where they would be placing the church in the middle and he is not sure if this is the best use of the land and would be interested if any other commissioners especially the real estate people have issue with this also.

Commissioner Spranger stated he supports Commissioner Barkers view also as it is his concern also with having 5 acres zoned commercial on Beckley Rd. that is limited real estate on that corridor; where the Planning Commission for the past year or so have been speaking of possible changes in that area and now might be a good time for that discussion, because of taking 5 acres of prime real estate out of the market for commercial development.

Commissioner John Stetler stated he understands their concerns but does not think it is within their purview of this group or city to develop an intense plan for each parcel size and its use. Said he feels this is a reasonable use for this land and in his opinion better than its previous use.

Commissioner Godfrey stated he had the same concerns as Commissioner Barker had until he continued to read the report and see that the Neighborhood Planning Council whom brought forth the discussion of the TBD zone and some strong objection to commercial development in that corridor and now give their unanimous support to this particular SUP application request. Stated this is one reason he decided to be in support.

Commissioner Frantz stated to address the issue regarding generation of tax revenue, she does not find within the purview of basis of determination; however in looking at the Central Business District and the downtown there are a multitude of houses of worship mixed with both commercial and residential uses and may not generate a tax base; she believes that the Downtown Central Business District is not negatively impacted by the existence of those houses of worship.

Commissioner Godfrey stated that in working with Pastor Hess in the past over the years; they have approved other request as his congregation had continued to grow and have always been an expletory neighbor. He would hope that his congregation continues to grow and that a family orientated ministry would be very beneficial to the future development of their city.

Mayor Baldwin stated she agrees that they have an excellent applicant; asked the question regarding having a church within so many feet of liquor sales and how those businesses are impacted. Ms. Hilton stated it is a required 500 ft. separation distance and the church can waive that requirement; noted that there are issues regarding the definition of a bar in our zoning ordinance and needs to be addressed regarding how it is defined. Said that currently in the TBD it allows for restaurants and need to look at how they are defined as well and that a bar currently would not be allowed in a Transitional Business District.

Mayor Baldwin asked regarding places such as Applebee's, who serve alcoholic beverages; is it a bar or restaurant. Said she recalled when a church asked to be in the plaza near Hobby Lobby they had asked them to waive the 500 ft. distance condition. Pastor Hess stated they would be willing to waive the 500 ft. condition if another business wished to serve liquor; he is not for it but would pray no business would come in that direction.

Commissioner Barker asked to clarify if a condition may be placed where any other commercial development would not have any adverse effect. Ms. Jill Steele, Deputy City Attorney stated if you do not want the recommended approval of this SUP for a church to inhibit any other commercial development such as restaurants etc. with a liquor license a condition would need to be set.

**AMMENDED MOTION BY COMMISSIONER BARKER, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER BUSCHER TO APPROVE THE SPECIAL USE PERMIT TO ALLOW A CHURCH FOR PROPERTY LOCATED AT 4720 BECKLEY ROAD, TO INCLUDE THE STAFF FINDINGS AND ADMINISTRATIVE CONDITIONS NOTED IN THE STAFF REPORT AND THAT THE PETITIONER WOULD NOT OBJECT TO ANY ESTABLISHMENT WITHIN 500 FT. OF CHURCH OF SERVING ALCOHOL.**

Commissioner Godfrey stated if he remembered correctly, in the TBD a business would need to be either a hotel, motel, or restaurant and that just a bar would not be allowed. Ms. Hilton stated that it is allowed by right to have restaurants in the TBD and under the definition of restaurant there is no distinction between serving and not serving alcohol. Said they are working on amending the ordinance to better clarify so it is not an issue.

Commissioner Spranger asked if adult entertainment is permitted in the Transitional Business Districts. Ms. Hilton stated no not in the TBD; it is allowed by Special Use in limited zoning districts.

**A VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE MOTION: ALL IN FAVOR; NONE OPPOSED; MOTION APPROVED.**

**A VOTE WAS TAKEN ON THE AMENDED MOTION: ALL IN FAVOR; NONE OPPOSED; MOTION APPROVED.**

7. **Old Business:** None

8. **New Business:**

**A. Woodland Park Land Management Plan (Presentation):**

Mr. Jeff Hovarter, Director of Parks and Recreation, City of Battle Creek was present and stated they have a group of committed citizens who have been working with the Parks & Recreation Department in the city for some years now who care passionately about Woodland Park which is 146 acres of land located behind the First Wesleyan Church with parking lots both on Gethings Rd. and Helmer Rd. Stated they have been working in partnership with this volunteer group the "Woodland Park Nature Preserve Committee" for approximately six years and have advanced to the stage where they have written a grant, hired a consultant and worked with them to develop a plan to protect and manage the natural environment of the park. Stated they feel it is worthy of letting them discuss with the Planning Commission and provide a blessing on the plan and then present it to the City Commission. Noted in the past they had a site Master Plan that was presented and approved by the Planning Commission and adopted by the City Commission and are now following a consistent pattern of having any plans for development or use of that park come before this body.

Commissioner Hicks noted he is very proud of the parks within this city for being clean and safe for the community.

Ms. Joyce Garrett, President of the Woodland Park Foundation Committee, stated they are a community based group of volunteers whose mission is to promote, improve and protect this nature preserve for all citizens to view and enjoy. Stated over the past several months the committee in partnership with the Parks & Recreation Dept. have worked diligently with the Landscape Architect Planners Inc. to develop the Land Management Plan for Woodland Park and Nature Preserve, which is based on the concept of the re-establishment of a vigorous productive and attractive landscape that recognizes five components: removal of evasive plants, identification improvement, re-establishment of the diverse native habitats, development of a long term native planting program, development of a community outdoor information and education program, and finally development of an ongoing monitoring program. Stated they

have a consultant that helped with the park restoration. Ms. Garrett wanted to recognize two members; Mr. Dwight Grandgenett, board member who is the Corresponding Secretary also the Chair of this Land Management Plan who has worked many hours and put forth a lot of effort; also Mrs. Rita Grandgenett, who is their Grant Committee Chair and Public Relations Committee. Noted that Planning Commissioner Steve Barker is also on their Advisory Committee.

Commissioner Frantz wanted to note with respect to Mr. Hovarter regarding his comments of what they have approved or indorsed previously from some perspectives particularly budgetary constraints; that was then and this is now. Stated with budgetary constraints not being mentioned; she is proud of all the parks within this city, although from time to time have seen them somewhat neglected perhaps by a contractor who had done a poor job. Commissioner Frantz referenced page 3 of the document submitted, where boardwalk and observation deck was mentioned twice, 12 ft. multipurpose pathway, and trails which all would need some maintenance and attention over time and asked Mr. Hovarter what the plans are for the maintenance of the park.

Ms. Joyce Garrett stated in 2005-2006 they had established a community project fund “an endowment fund” through the Battle Creek Community Foundation and are their fiduciary. Said it is their goal to fund a lot of the projects through this fund and would also help to maintain and improve the park.

Mr. Jeff Hovarter said Commissioner Frantz is correct; they struggle as a community in these times where resources are limited and have not been able to full fill some of their plans as the resources are not available; but at the same time balancing it with not letting the need to look at the future and have a vision for the future be stopped. Said he wants to make sure it is clear that this is a plan and there is no approval of funding going on when it gets to the City Commission; if in fact that occurs that they are approving a plan and not approving a dime of funding. Stated as a community they would be very blessed if they had volunteer groups like this group for every park; and hope to cultivate more volunteer groups because they do not have the resources and have parks that need more attention.

Commissioner Godfrey asked Mr. Hovarter if the Capital Improvement priorities and goals listed before them be relegated to the Foundation or would they see them in the CIP. Mr. Hovarter stated they will become a part of the CIP and be phased in, some will show up this year and then all by next year; again the CIP does not put the burden upon the City, it creates categories and will be listed predominately as being funded by private or outside sources.

Mr. Dwight Grandgenett stated that regarding the funding issue they have two plans, a Master Sight Plan that was developed earlier and has mostly the Capital Improvement Plans and the process that Mr. Hovarter just described would be followed there and any assistance that their volunteer group could do in locating funds for grants or soliciting for extra resources for those, they would participate in. Stated this plan being presented today is a way to manage the habitat at the park and if you notice in the name it is “Nature Preserve” and their point is that left alone it would become a 145 acres sticker patch as the invasive species would take over. Noted this plan would organize their thoughts in an open way so you can see what they are up to and what the community would want (you would be representing the community) in this case and that it would provide a blue print for them to go after bite size grants to get things done such as



planting, removal of invasive species, meadow restoration, and educating the public both children and adults in the community about a wonderful place they have. Stated they believe this provides an open plan where volunteers can cooperate in partnership with the Parks and Recreation Department and the community to really develop something special and keep this nature preserve a green space in Battle Creek that everyone can enjoy for the next 25 years and that is the essence of this plan.

Commissioner Hicks stated regarding his comment earlier regarding the condition of our parks; his view on this as is all over the country is citizens taking ownership, belonging and responsibility. If we as a city can instill that in our citizenry we would have cleaner parks and better everything and if trash was seen on the ground he would not assume that Parks and Recreation were not doing their job.

Commissioner Frantz wanted to add that she admires and commends the volunteers for the wonderful work they have done on this project as it is exciting and they are blessed to have; noted she had to take a look at the fiscal constraints. Commissioner Hicks stated he believes she had done the right thing by inquiring.

**MOTION BY COMMISSIONER GODFREY, SUPPORTED BY COMMISSIONER FRANTZ TO ACCEPT THE LAND MANAGEMENT PLAN FOR THE WOODLAND PARK AND NATURE PRESERVE AS PRESENTED TODAY.**

Mayor Baldwin asked if there were any restrictions from any of the city's labor agreements that would prohibit or cause issue if volunteers completely wanted to take care of this park. Mr. Jeff Hovarter stated there are two answers; one deals with the contractual requirements they are able and allowed without breaking any agreements to use volunteers in their system and currently some labor units take issue with, so it is a balancing act. Noted in his opinion that most labor units in recent years have been very open to them finding ways to get some of the work done and yes they can legally do it and communicate well with the labor units to keep them informed so they do not become offended. Stated their employees for Public Works are the ones who mow the trails at this particular park and pick-up the trash and plow the drives in the winter and are not experienced in removing invasive plants, so the volunteer group does this and saves the city a lot of money.

Mayor Baldwin stated our Public Works folks do a fabulous job; example is of how they handled the storm damage this past year. Stated they just do not have the budget to do things like this and hope they can continue to work with everyone, that if we have volunteers we need to take advantage of their help.

Commissioner Spranger stated he was confused as to if this was a public or private project and what was it that he is adopting. Said he hears that it is volunteers with the Foundation and endowment creating funds, but are told the Public Works Department is doing the mowing etc.

Mr. Jeff Hovarter stated it is a public park owned by the City of Battle Creek and they have been engaging in a partnership with a group of volunteers who have been helping them take care of the park. The plan you are adopting is a City Plan, where the volunteers have helped them develop the plan and funded the cost of hiring a consultant's or experts to develop the plan. It becomes the City's Plan where they are agreeing where they raise money and

volunteers implement the plan and cannot do anything without the City's permission. Said they would not want persons to take it upon themselves without communicating with the City or make any changes to our parks, etc. Stated this process is designed for the city to adopt a plan and they are here today to help explain the plan along with himself. Stated they have a vested interest as they funded it and have a passionate interest, but is the City's plan if adopted.

Commissioner Spranger asked if there was a cost for the city through the Capital Improvement Plan. Mr. Hovarter stated no, the cost currently that the city has is an operational cost like for all of the city parks that pays for the mowing, trash pick-up, plowing of drives and the additional things written in this plan like eradicating invasive species is something that they have budgeted or do and will continue to get worse and the park would change for the worse. Said the volunteers are saying that if you approve the plan they would take responsibility for dealing with the things needing done that cannot be afforded by the city, which is a lot of hard work such as pulling weeds, etc.

Mayor Baldwin noted the Leila Arboretum is a city owned property, but obviously the Arboretum Society is again partners with the city to help take care of that property; so it is not like they have not done this type of arrangement before.

Commissioner Barker asked to abstain from voting as he is a member of the committee, has been involved and is very proud of the work they have done. Said as community interested citizens volunteer their time it does put additional work on the Parks and Recreation staff requiring them to attend meetings etc., and they are fortunate to have good staff at the City's Parks & Recreation Department that have done such a good job on the plan, which encourages that volunteer spirit and thinks that is why you are presented with such a detailed plan today.

Christine Hilton asked to clarify the motion; was it to accept it and recommend its adoption to the City Commission. It was stated yes, that is correct.

**A VOTE WAS TAKEN: SEVEN IN FAVOR; ONE ABSTAINED (BARKER); NONE OPPOSED; MOTION APPROVED.**

**9. Comments by the Public: None**

**10. Comments by the Staff and Commission Members:**

Ms. Christine Hilton noted that the meeting scheduled for December 21, 2011, will be canceled as we had not received any petitions for that agenda and that in January she would like to have the opportunity to hold a workshop to review a 1-3 year work-plan to solicit any projects that the Planning Commission might want to have considered; this would allow them to be prioritized and provide direction. Stated the deadline for next month's meeting for receiving petitions is at the end of this month, so we are not sure yet if there will be any agenda items. Noted we will also be holding a joint workshop either in January or early February depending on Finance Department regarding the review of the Capital Improvement Plan, and will notify everyone once it has been scheduled.

Commissioner Hicks stated regarding the matter from Commissioner Spranger and Commissioner Stetler; hopes at some point will be worked out through future meetings as they

are important, but are two opposite extreme ways of thinking about planning and would be good to discuss.

Commissioner Godfrey wanted to thank the Planning staff for the work they do; said if they did not have them here in the City of Battle Creek it would have required a tremendous amount of library hours on behalf of this commission. Noted in taking the Michigan Planner course one of the other smaller cities in attendance did not have a Planning staff to assist in gathering the information for creating the reports and information needed; in having taken the course he now understands what goes into the work and cannot thank the staff enough for what they bring to this commission.

Commissioner Hicks said that was well stated and believe they all are in agreement.

11. **Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 5:12 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Christine M. Hilton, AICP  
Executive Secretary, Planning Commission